

July 17, 2006

Erika Kegel
Project Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Contra Costa Water District's Alternative Intake Project (CEQ #20060177)

Dear Ms. Kegel:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the DEIS referenced above. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Our comments are provided in accordance with the EPA-specific extension to the comment deadline date from June 26, 2006 to July 17, 2006 (telephone conversation between Laura Fujii and Samantha Salvia, CCWD Project Manager, May 10, 2006).

The primary purpose of this project is to protect and improve the quality of water delivered to Contra Costa Water District's (CCWD) untreated- and treated-water customers. The project would enable CCWD to consistently meet current and future drinking water standards, improve operational flexibility, and protect delivered water quality during emergencies. Although the project would change the location, timing, and quality of some of CCWD's existing diversions, it would not increase CCWD's total Delta diversion capacity, water supply demand, or quantity of water delivered to its service area each year.

The project would result in permanent conversion of 6 to 8 acres of rural agricultural land and short-term construction emissions of criteria air pollutants. Mitigation measures are proposed to avoid and minimize these effects. There would be a beneficial reduction of fish losses from entrainment and impingement at existing CCWD Delta intakes.

EPA supports the project purpose and has rated the DEIS as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed "Summary of Rating Definitions). While we support the Proposed Action, we note that Alternative 3, Modified Operations, provides the greatest benefit to

fisheries. The Final EIS (FEIS) should include additional quantified estimates of the fisheries benefits of Alternative 3 and the feasibility of implementing this alternative.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the FEIS is released for public review, please send one copy to the address above (mailcode: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-972-3988 or Laura Fujii, the lead reviewer for this project at 415-972-3852 or fujii.laura@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Duane James, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Enclosure: Summary of EPA's Rating Definitions

cc: Samantha Salvia, Contra Costa Water District
Steve Thompson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Rodney R. McInnis, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service